

The River's Voice



A publication of...

KALAMAZOO RIVER CLEANUP COALITION

EPA Region 5 Records Ctr.



312136

The WATER Issue

(Aren't they all??)

HEY, BIG SPENDER...

Koch Industries* has been identified by National Journal Magazine as one of the top 25 lobbying spenders in 2008. That year, according to National Journal, Koch Industries spent \$15,130,000 on lobbying. This figure is up 262.8% from 2007 (when they spent \$4,170,000), the largest increase in spending compared to any of the top spenders.

Koch Industries is in a powerful position, both financially and physically—Koch Industries, PAC is located on Pennsylvania Avenue, across from the White House.

**Koch Industries, the largest private company in the U.S., purchased Georgia-Pacific for \$21 billion in December, 2005. Georgia-Pacific is one of the corporations identified as responsible for cleaning up the Allied Paper, Inc./Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River site.*

WANTED: WATER WARRIORS

We are inextricably entwined with water; our very bodies are made up of over half water. Water is of major importance to all living things; in some organisms, up to 90 percent of their body weight comes from water. Up to 60 percent of the human body is water, the brain is composed of 70 percent water, and the lungs are nearly 90 percent water. About 83 percent of our blood is water, which helps digest our food, transport waste, and control body temperature. Each day humans must replace 2.4 liters of water, some through drinking and the rest taken by the body from the foods eaten. We depend upon clean water for our existence. (<http://ga.water.usgs.gov/edu/propertyou.html>).

Water is a finite resource. Scientists tell us that there is approximately the same amount of water on earth as there was when the earth was formed. The water that comes out of your kitchen faucet contains molecules from the past. You could be sipping water molecules in your coffee that a Triceratops once drank. You could be cooking with water molecules that once sloshed inside the belly of a T-Rex.

If we value clean water, we must protect it. Our city, like many cities across this nation are fighting to keep water safe. Currently, on the back of Kalamazoo city buses, an advertisement runs: *Protect Groundwater. It's what you drink.*

"If all the world's water were fit into a gallon jug, the fresh water available for us to use would equal only about one tablespoon." —

Lenntech.com

We are fortunate to live in such a great community and have water warriors in our midst. We need to listen to them. Jeff Spoelstra, who fights every day to protect our water through his work with the Kalamazoo River Watershed reminds us that the Kalamazoo River doesn't have a PR firm. Who speaks for our rivers and water?

...Cont. on page 2

Inside this issue:

WHAT'S AN AQUIFER, AND WHAT'S	2
MILLENNIUM HOLDINGS: WATER	3
FRIEND OR FOE?	
KALAMAZOO WATER FACTS	4
IS OUR DRINKING WATER SAFE?	4

WATER WARRIORS, CONT.

Dayle Harrison, founder and president of the Kalamazoo River Protection Association, is concerned that the Kalamazoo River is being studied to death. He believes that money that known polluters have spent to "study" the river could be better funneled into cleaning up the PCBs.

There are soldiers for water within the EPA but they are weaponless. They go into battle squarely facing corporate polluters with a Superfund program that is fundless. There are soldiers for water within the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) but they are too broke to investigate contaminated sites and track down polluters. Proposed funding cuts loom on the horizon for MDEQ.

So what can the average citizens do to assure that we do not steal drinking water from the lips of our children and grandchildren? Pay attention to how we are using our water. A person needs 4 to 5 gallons of water per day to survive well. And yet, it is estimated that the

average American *individual* uses 100 to 176 gallons of water daily. Compare that to the average African *family* using about 5 gallons of water each day. As Americans, we use five times more the amount of water than Europeans use.

What are we doing with all that water? Just brushing one's teeth twice a day uses up to an estimated 12 gallons of water a day. The simple act of turning off the water as you brush your teeth or shave can make a difference. The better we can conserve our water and treat it like the invaluable resource that it is, the less we compromise its quality. The United Nations Environment Program predicts that if present consumption patterns continue, two out of every three people on Earth will live in water-stressed conditions by the year 2025. We must change our relationship with water by conserving it. That starts by paying attention to how we use water and any changes we make, no matter how small, to have a positive impact.

"To cherish what remains of the Earth and to foster its renewal is our only legitimate hope of survival."

—Wendell Berry, Poet/Farmer

We also must not allow corporations to put profit before human health and the safety of our drinking water now or in the future. We can pick up the phone, send an email or letter to let our government officials know we care, and ask them what they are actively doing to protect our drinking water from becoming tainted with PCBs as well as other contaminants. Find out what they are doing today to assure that the cleanup of the Allied Paper, Inc./Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River site continues.

Hurry up, soldier, your water needs you.

To find out more about how you can protect and conserve our water, go to the City of Kalamazoo's website, <http://www.kalamazoo-city.org/portal/water.php> and/or pick up a copy of the April 2009 edition of *Encore Magazine* and read Theresa Coty O'Neil's piece, "Take Care of Our Water".

WHAT'S AN AQUIFER, AND WHAT'S IT 'FER'?

An aquifer (AHK-wi-fer) is a natural, underground source of water that can be shallow or deep. Ninety-seven percent of the world's liquid freshwater is found underground in aquifers. We are increasingly dependent on groundwater—up to 2 billion people, a third of the world's population, rely on it!

The Kalamazoo City website, www.kalamazoo-city.org, states that three-quarters of the cities throughout the

United States use groundwater as part of their water supply. In our area, groundwater is pumped from aquifers by means of wells at several different well fields in the city's water system.

Researchers have found that once an aquifer becomes contaminated, it **cannot be restored** to a condition compatible with health-based standards.

Despite this, 68% of Superfund Records of Decision (RODs) choose groundwater pumping and treating as a final remedy to "restore" an aquifer when, in fact, it can not be restored. (Dr. Curtis Travis & Carolyn Doty, *Can contaminated aquifers at Superfund sites be remediated?* **Environ. Sci. Technol.**, Vol. 24, No. 10, 1990, pgs. 1464-1466).

MILLENNIUM HOLDINGS: WATER'S FRIEND OR FOE?

The Kalamazoo River is polluted with PCBs in part due to responsible parties like Millennium Holdings LLC, owned by LyondellBasell Industries. Fortunately, for the Allied Paper, Inc/Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River Superfund Site, LyondellBasell has, according to its own website, combined annual revenues of \$54.6 billion and more than 16,000 employees worldwide.

Unfortunately for the Kalamazoo River Superfund Site, on January 9, 2009, LyondellBasell Industries announced that it filed for Chapter 11 Bankruptcy in order to facilitate a "financial restructuring that reflects the realities of today's market environment and positions us for the future," said CEO, Volker Trautz.

Filing for bankruptcy doesn't seem to have hurt their ability to make new business transactions. Volker Trautz was quoted by Chem Weekly as saying, "During this reorganization period, our goal is for the company to continue its operations and its relationships with customers and suppliers in the normal course." And it has.

On February 24, 2009, LyondellBasell Industries announced that they had signed an agreement with Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah

University to pursue research and development programs.

Two days later on February 26 at the EPA open house in Plainwell, KRCC asked Steve Cook, the Lyondell lawyer representing Millennium Holdings the following:

Q: Is it true that under bankruptcy law higher priority claims are paid out first?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay, would you say then that Millennium considers human health a higher priority than, say, paying janitorial services?

A: It is up to the bankruptcy court to prioritize....

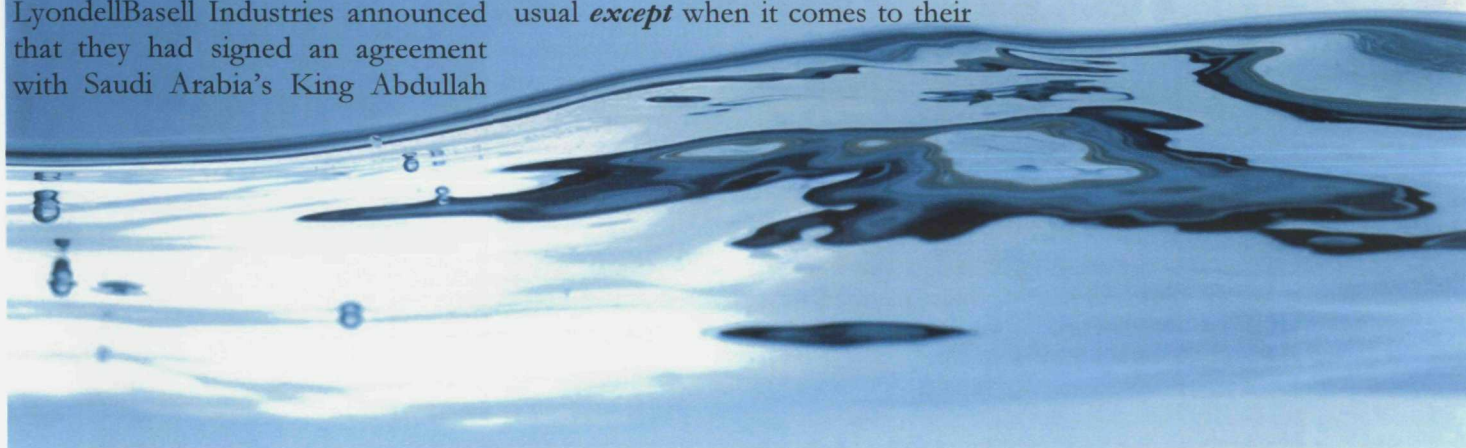
Less than two weeks later, on March 12, 2009, LyondellBasell confirmed its participation in the development and construction of a petrochemical complex in Kazakhstan.

LyondellBasell, one of the largest polymers, petrochemicals, and fuels companies in the world appears to be continuing business as usual *except* when it comes to their

company, Millennium Holdings LLC, sharing in the responsibility for cleaning up the Allied Paper, Inc/Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River site.

Perhaps CEO Volker Trautz and his 16,000 employees should read their own corporate website that touts it as, "committed to protecting the environment as well as the health and safety of our employees and neighbors." It goes on to say that "as members of the global community we also have a responsibility to operate in a manner that protects people and the environment and preserves the planet for future generations." Only their actions of working to continue the cleanup will prove if they are what they profess to be.

Next issue: Len Blavatnik, the billionaire oil tycoon behind the empire of LyondellBasell Industries.



Kalamazoo River Cleanup Coalition



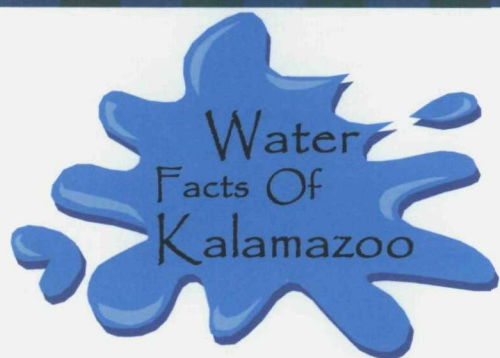
c/o 3320 Laird Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI 49008

Phone: 269-598-6274

Fax: 269-342-4668

E-mail: krcc@chartermi.net

The Kalamazoo River Cleanup Coalition is a not-for profit organization committed to working with all stakeholders to develop and support a viable plan to clean up the entire Allied Site, Inc./ Portage Creek/ Kalamazoo River Superfund Site



- Kalamazoo has the second largest groundwater-based drinking water system in Michigan.
- The city produced 6.8 billion gallons of water in 2008.
- Kalamazoo has 19 Wellfields/18 Water Pumping Stations.
- There are 803 miles of Water Main.
- 121,000 Population Served

*These Kalamazoo water facts and more can be found at
http://www.kalamazoo-city.org/portal/water.php?page_id=623.*

IS OUR DRINKING WATER SAFE?

On February 26 the EPA held a public PCB Cleanup Progress meeting in Plainwell. KRCC asked the following of EPA officials:

I want to trust the EPA. My neighbors want to trust the EPA. If you could answer this question here tonight, you would go a long way to restoring trust. As the NTH consultants hired by the City of Kalamazoo noted in their fall report, the safety of our drinking water was "virtually ignored in the RI". Can you tell this community that our water is safe? Can you tell us the potential risks of contamination to our drinking water? If our water is safe, and will be safe for years and years to come, could you please share your data with us to support your answer?

The EPA was unable to provide a yes or no answer as to the current and future safety of our drinking water.

We need to know if the contamination that is currently on the Allied Site is/has/will be migrating down and towards the aquifers that exist in that area--aquifers that we depend upon for our water supply. When KRCC asked when the EPA would know and be able to tell us, we were told we could expect an answer sometime this summer when a groundwater report will be released.

